

MEMORANDUM

To: The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors

From: The Loudoun County Housing Advisory Board
Michelle Krockner, Chair and Tamar Datan, Vice-Chair

Re: 2009 Second Quarter Report

Date: August 5, 2009

This is the second in a series of regularly scheduled reports to the Board of Supervisors regarding the work plan and activities of the Housing Advisory Board and its committees.

Board of Supervisors Adoption of the Consolidated Plan

Thanks to the good work of the Department of Family Services staff and many other parties, Loudoun completed the five year update of its Consolidated Plan to qualify for federal CDBG funds. The HAB appreciates the careful analysis conducted in the preparation of this report, and believes the recommendations are sound and achievable. We thank the BOS for approving this plan in such a timely fashion.

However, we would like to highlight the significant gap between the housing goals articulated in the approved Consolidated Plan, and the actual unmet need for affordable housing in our community. As you may recall, the HAB conducted a very detailed study of the unmet housing needs in Loudoun, comparing the percentage of workers, by industry, that commute into Loudoun with thirty (30) comparable counties across the country. The findings of this study indicate that a significant number of workers – projected to be as many as 30,000 by 2030 – might choose to live in Loudoun, as opposed to commuting significant distances through and into Loudoun for work.

The goals approved were developed "based on priority needs identified in the Consolidated Plan and the availability of resources to address those needs." In other words, achieving the approved goals would meet only the most urgent unmet housing needs, given the significant constraint of available resources. The total number of new affordable housing units that would be created, together with the number of households that would receive some form of financial assistance, is just under 1,000. An additional 1,000 households (some also receiving assistance) would receive housing counseling.

The enormous gap between the approved goals and the unmet housing need is alarming, and the lack of affordable housing options must remain a priority. We hope you will recognize that Loudoun's quality of life, and its potential for future prosperity, is contingent upon an appropriate jobs/housing balance. Increased congestion on our roadways, difficulty recruiting and retaining a qualified workforce, and unsustainable fossil fuel dependence, are just a few of the consequences should we neglect to plan thoughtfully to provide adequate housing opportunities for our workers. We must start

to think outside the box, and become far bolder in our efforts to address this enormous gap between unmet demand and proposed supply.

The Affordable Dwelling Unit Ordinance

On July 22, the Public Safety/Human Services Committee accepted a detailed work plan to review and redraft Article 7 of the Zoning Ordinance and Section 1450 of the County Code as a result of a recommendation from the Affordable Dwelling Unit Advisory Board (ADUAB). The HAB strongly supports this effort. **While the County has adopted programs that provide a variety of incentives for individuals to secure affordable housing, the Affordable Dwelling Unit Ordinance is the primary mechanism by which the County can require the development of affordable units.** However, it is recognized that the ordinance has limits and regulatory requirements that reduce its potential to deliver greater numbers of affordable units. **Note:** For a listing of Article 7 issues to be addressed, please refer to the work plan approved by the Public Safety/Human Services Committee on July 22. This work plan has been submitted to the Board of Supervisors.

The current housing policies in the Comprehensive Plan were adopted on September 18, 2007. Since their adoption, there has been no in-depth analysis of County regulations to determine if any existing ordinances are in conflict or adversely impact the newly adopted housing policies. The Policy Committee of the HAB has begun to identify those policies that are best implemented through regulation, to determine which ordinance changes would result in the most effective outcomes to achieve the County's housing goals.

The HAB looks forward to working closely with the ADUAB on the Article 7 work plan. Meetings between the appropriate committees of each board, as well as a joint meeting of both boards is planned to develop and discuss the options for Article 7 amendments.

Development and the Keynote Employment Area

The HAB has listened with interest to the ongoing deliberations surrounding the various development proposals in the Keynote Employment Area. While we believe it is outside of our purview to comment on the merits of a particular development, the discussions have brought to light an issue that we as housing advisors believe to be important to consider.

The planning designation for a single use - in this case development related to employment - conflicts with the principles of many of the newly adopted housing policies that support development with a mix of uses, locating housing near employment centers and major transportation nodes. While the approval of a baseball stadium, office and retail space promotes economic development and provides valuable tax revenue, serious consideration must be given to the impacts on the transportation network and the housing/jobs balance. Allowing for residential

development near employment centers could reduce auto trips and mitigate traffic gridlock.

The HAB will continue to follow the issues to be addressed regarding the Keynote Employment Area, and we look forward to the appropriate opportunities to participate in discussions regarding the provision of workforce housing proximate to employment locations.

"Beltway Burden:" Urban Land Institute and Terwilliger Center for Workforce Housing

In closing, we would like to share a study co-sponsored by the Urban Land Institute and the Terwilliger Center for Workforce Housing entitled "*Beltway Burden: The Combined Cost of Housing and Transportation in the Greater Washington, DC, Metropolitan Are.*"